SKETCHES;

OR,

ESSAYS

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

SKETCH XIX.

OF BUSINESS.

I Should take the moſt natural and agreeable life to conſiſt in a well-proportioned mixture of buſineſs, amuſement and pleaſure. A life of mere diſſipation and pleaſure muſt be expoſed to many weary, tedious, inſipid hours; and haunted with reflections mortifying to an ingenuous mind. A little buſineſs is neceſſary to keep off the languor which attends idleneſs, and to prepare you for enjoying the hours of indulgence with a proper quickneſs of appetite. Unhappy the man who is obliged to live by the buſineſs to which he has taken an averſion: though perhaps not more miſerable than ſome independent people, who, having nothing to do, have neither taſte nor genius to fill up their time agreeably.

A keen turn to amuſement, and to the common drudging buſineſs of the world, I believe ſeldom meet in the ſame perſon. A ſtrong diſpoſition to ſelfiſh induſtry, obtuſe ſenſations, (which are ſeldom unattended with a proper ſhare of confidence) and a moderate degree of diſcretion and judgment, are ſufficient, with the help of a very ſlight education, to qualify almoſt any man to ſucceed in any buſineſs. And it is evident, from numberleſs inſtances, that a man may arrive at the higheſt ſtation in ſome of the moſt ingenious profeſſions, by juſt the ſame kind of talents and arts as make an eminent taylor or a ſtay-maker.

SKETCH XX.

OF LUCK.

THAT ſenſible, or at leaſt that plauſible, old ſaying, *Quiſquis ſuæ fortunæ faber eſt*, which in plain Engliſh means that *every man is the carpenter or bricklayer of his own fortune*, is not to be admitted without a great many exceptions; for luck, good or bad, will every now and then be meddling, in

what regards the prosperity of such *reptiles*, such *vile worms*, as some humble philosophers are pleased to reckon the race of human kind.

Fortuna favet fortibus—'Fortune fa-'vours the brave, says another. A third says, *Fortuna favet fatuis*—'For-'tune favours fools.' This last observation seems to have more examples in it's favour than both the other two; for fools and weak people, they say, are generally remarable for good luck. But though fortune interferes ever so evidently in their favour, few of them have the generosity or gratitude to own it; ascribing, or what ought rather to be called imputing, their success entirely to their own superior merit.

SKETCH XXI.

OF LARGE SOCIETIES.

WHEN a great number of weak heads and bad hearts are collected into a mass, they must naturally improve in vice and folly; and very fast too, if they are not kept in order by a wise discipline. It was probably from this consideration, amongst others, that in former times, a prince celebrated for wisdom thought it an object of the utmost consequence to a whole kingdom, to put a stop at once to the further growth of it's capital. In a very populous and over-grown city, especially if it happens to be the seat of an extensive commerce, great multitudes of people without either education or good natural sense, must grow rich. These, in all popular dissentions, will generally throw their weight into the wrong scale; will join the clamour against the most salutary measures; raving for things unreasonable, impracticable, and what, with better eyes, they would often see detrimental and pernicious to themselves. Yet such heads as these lead the rest of the nation, who consider them as their true and incorrupted sources of political intelligence, their vigilant guardians, their safe protectors; the soundest, ablest, and most disinterested judges of whatever belongs to the management of national affairs. God knows to what a contemptible degree they are mistaken! For there is no thing more true, than that the inhabitants of a certain metropolis are, in general, not only the most brutal, indecent and immoral, but the most stupid and ignorant, of the whole people throughout the kingdom.

Oh!—to any one who feels for the honour and dignity of England, what a subject of shame and mortification it must be, that the bad manners of those who inhabit the capital, expose the whole nation to the contempt of all foreigners!—Oh! good God! to the contempt of all Europe; who must naturally form an unjust opinion of the more civilized and more sensible people in all the most distant corners of the kingdom, from what passes *here*. Where the master of the house is a clown, the whole family partakes in his disgrace; and is even apt to be infected by him. Pray don't call the people of this town Englishmen—for the honour of England, call them Londoners for ever—the yesty dregs of Great Britain and Ireland, the frothy scum of every nation in Europe, of every province in America, fermenting with the *Gowk-spittle* of Jamaica*, is their composition. Such Englishmen as these Londoners, good Heaven! are the only real enemies of England; which never can be ruined, but by their stupidity, their absurdity, their madness, and villainy. In this blessed meridan of Liberty, the French Protestants too; whose fathers, within the memory of some that are yet alive, fled hither for shelter from an inhuman persecution; are become, of a most humble colony of supplicants, a gang of profligate ruffians, that madly and ungratefully rebel against a government, to which they owed their protection then, and do to this day. In their own orginal country, the wheel, instead of the gallows, would long ago have put an end to *their* turbulence.

* This is the name by which the country people in Scotland call the white frothy substance, the nest, in which the gnats eggs are hatched amongst the branches of the sorrel and other plants. *Gowk* is their common word for *Cuckow*.

SKETCH

SKETCH XXII.

VOX POPULI VOX DEI.

THIS ſentence muſt have been firſt roared out by an impudent leader of ſome villainous faction: and it is ſurprizing that even the implicit indolence of ſenſible people ſhould, to this day, have permitted it to paſs without the leaſt examination. What?—*The cry of the ſtupid, ignorant, profane populace, who conſtitute the great majority of mankind, the voice of God!*—Heaven preſerve us! But this horrible blaſphemy has been ſo long familiar to our ears, that we hear it without ſhuddering, and even acquieſce in it. If thoſe blind gentry are ever in the right, it muſt be by chance, and they have only ſtumbled upon it. The tools of knaves muſt always be in the wrong; and, even when left to themſelves, the multitude hardly ever fail to be miſtaken.

For inſtance: of all thoſe who have, in almoſt every various denomination, from time to time, become favourites with the vulgar here, great and ſmall, within this preſent century, how few will be remembered in the next, except with contempt and infamy! Of thoſe idols, from the moſt exalted ſtations downward to the meaneſt; from the monarch's palace down to the tradeſman's kitchen, how few have not already ſurvived their falſe renown, rotted alive, and diſcovered their deformities naked enough to be perceived by the blindeſt populace that ever diſgraced human nature! who, at the ſame time, are never by any experience, any diſappointments, or the moſt flagrant diſcoveries, to be cured of their natural propenſity to this abſurd and fatal idolatry. This ſtupid idolatry is indeed the only religion that now remains to them. Yet, void as they are both of religion and morals, any cunning impudent knave might ſo operate upon their ſtupidity and ignorance, as to throw them all into a holy ferment again, by ſcreaming out that *the church is in danger*.

SKETCH XXIII.

OF THE PRESS.

THE Liberty of the Preſs is gone, was not long ago wantonly bawled out every night and morning from the lurking holes of Grub Street, from the Fleet, the King's Bench, the Marſhalſea, and perhaps from Newgate itſelf, by a parcel of factious ſcribblers; who, at the ſame time, were weekly and daily flinging about ſuch indecent abuſe, and ſuch impudent pernicious lies, as no wiſe government, except the preſent, in any country, or in any age, would, for it's own dignity, or the peace, harmony, and happineſs of ſociety, have ſuffered. That the Liberty of the Preſs is gone, was, indeed, too true, at the time when this impudent diſingenuous complaint was the moſt clamorous--But how? and in what ſenſe The daily and weekly conveyers of political intelligence, had, for a long time, almoſt univerſally, as I am told, ſhut up their *channels* to truth and common ſenſe; at leaſt, they ſeldom ſuffered any thing of that kind to paſs. They conveyed nothing almoſt but impudent lyes, nonſenſe, and villainy; which indeed is too much the caſe to this day.

I have for a long time, in ſad earneſt, conſidered the art of printing as a moſt pernicious invention. It puts it in the power of every blockhead and ſcoundrel to propagate ſtupidity, brutality, bad morals, deceit, and impoſture, throughout the land. In ſhort, the preſent indecency and licentiouſneſs of the Preſs, moſt evidently tends to the aboliſhing of it's Liberty, and that of the whole nation.

SKETCH XXIV.

OF THE POOR.

IN any country, opulent or not, it is a diſgrace to government, that any one, who dares to claim it's protection, ſhould ever periſh for want of neceſſaries. There ought to be no diſtreſs from want. Employ the Poor that are able to work; ſupply the infirm and ſuperannuated with a comfortable ſubſiſtence. The greateſt miſeries of life are often not to be cured, not even to be ſoothed, by all the advantages of wealth. And what a ſhameful inhuman crime it is to neglect thoſe to which a wiſe police could always apply an infallible remedy!

I ſay again, there ought to be no diſtreſs from want. Employ your Poor that are able to work. But we cannot oblige a *free-born Britain* to work, if he is ever ſo poor—God forbid!—But why? You can confine this ſon of freedom in a naſty gaol for a trifling debt; you can ſend him to Tyburn for a pitiful theft; and yet you cannot oblige him to make himſelf happy, by earning a comfortable livelihood in the way of honeſt induſtry. Very true; for, as a *free Briton*, the pooreſt man is ſtill his own maſter.—You mean, he has a right to make himſelf extremely miſerable? But what right has he to recline himſelf an uſeleſs burden upon ſociety? You'll ſay that ſociety may leave him to ſtarve; as it often does. But what's the good of that? The miſerable wretch goes to the dogs; and ſociety loſes a hand that might have been of ſome uſe. Pray, why do you ſend your boys to ſchool?—Why, ſurely, to learn to read and write, and qualify themſelves for buſineſs, in one ſhape or another.—Would not they rather paſs their time in play, d'ye think?—I ſuppoſe they would; but their maſters won't ſuffer them to be idle.—Well, thoſe idle fools we talk of are always children; and ought to be ſubmitted to any authority, that kindly obliges them to be buſy for their own happineſs.

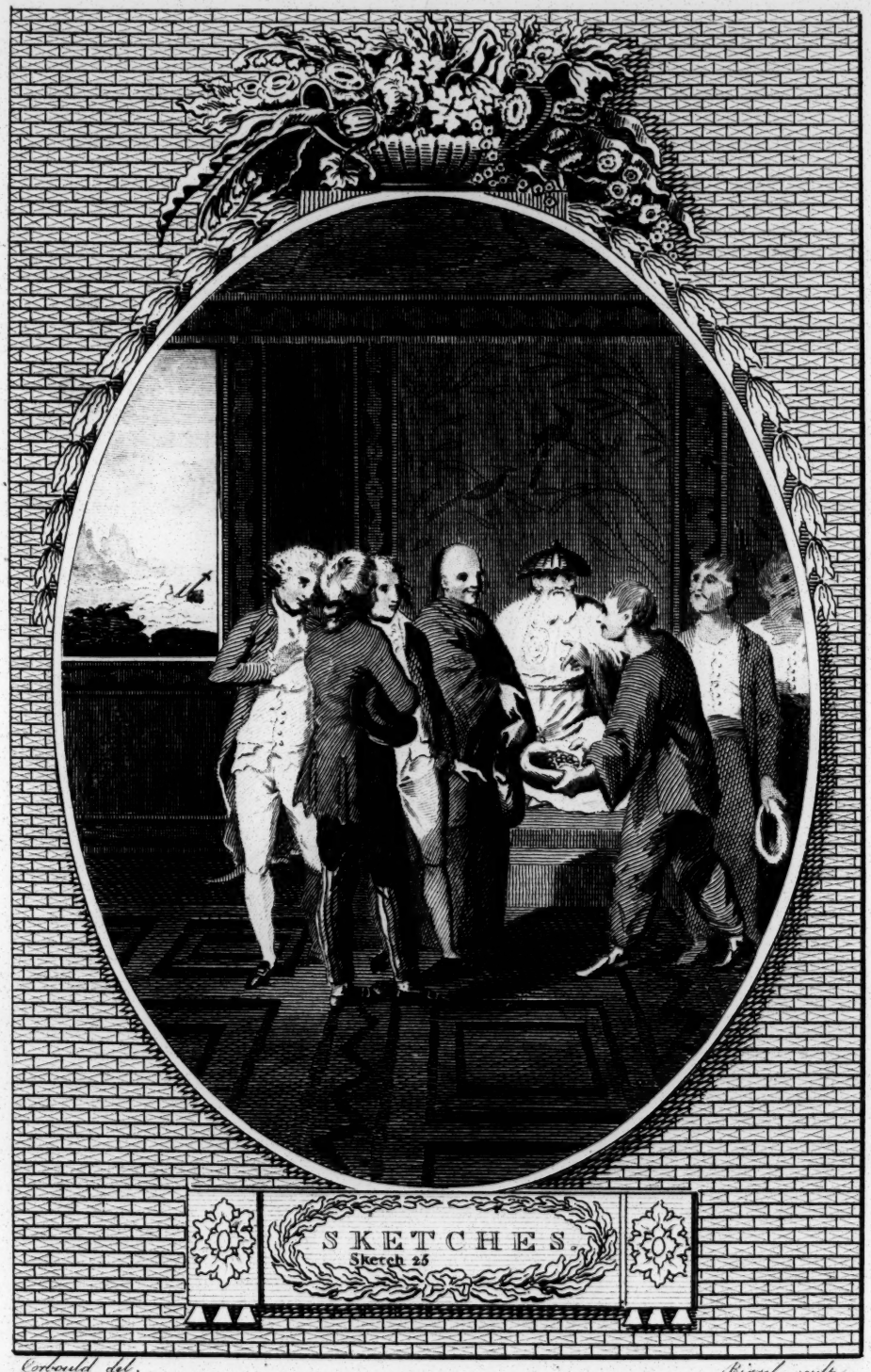
In a neighbouring country, whoſe plan of police is, perhaps, the moſt perfect that ever human wiſdom contrived, and the beſt executed, the pooreſt creature that can work is not ſuffered to be idle; the pooreſt creature that cannot work is not left to ſtarve.

SKETCH XXV.

AN ANECDOTE.

I Am naturally fond of ſtrangers; and, where all other circumſtances are equal, ſhould find myſelf diſpoſed to pay them more or leſs attention in proportion to their diſtance from home. Where all things elſe are equal, in performing any little duties of benevolence within my power, I ſhould prefer a German to a Hollander or a Frenchman; a Greek, a Ruſſian, or a Turk, to a German; a Perſian to a Turk; and ſo on to the utmoſt limits of the Eaſt.—Of all the people upon earth, the Aſiatics appear to me the moſt amiable, noble, and generous: they ſeem the moſt poſſeſſed with that virtuous heroic enthuſiaſm, which exalts human nature to it's higheſt degree of ſublimity. One late well-atteſted inſtance of their generous humanity may perhaps not be too tireſome to the impatient reader. The gentleman is but lately dead who favoured me with the following relation of a fact which deſerves to be more generally known; and I give it in his own words.

'In the year 1730, the Prince George, Captain Croſs, from Bengal and Surat to Canton, was drove into Juncum Bay, on the coaſt of China, in a hard gale of wind, of ſuch force as to make the ſupercargoes, Meſſrs. Stephenſon and Harriſon, with Mr. Alex. Wedderburn, purſer, go aſhore in the pinnace, in order to get a pilot, and ſuch other help as their diſtreſs then required. The wind



Corbould del. Birrel sculp.

Plate I. Published as the Act directs, by John Walker ..June 30. 1787.

wind all that night blowing fiercer, next morning they were told the ſhip was loſt, which they ſoon perceived to be too true. The Mandarine of that diſtrict immediately ordered, that the fore-mentioned gentlemen, with Mr. Barlow, fourth mate, who then acted as coxſwain of the pinnace, and the Laſcars, ſhould be provided with lodgings and all proper accommodation; and that every part of the wreck, and all the goods that could be ſaved, ſhould be carefully gathered together, and put into a ſecure place for them; all which was faithfully performed. The generous Mandarine's humanity did not end here; for he ordered a preſent of 350 tale * to Mr. Stephenſon, 300 to Mr. Harriſon, 250 to Mr. Wedderburn, 200 to Mr. Barlow, and to each Laſcar as much as was reckoned equal to their full wages, had the voyage been performed in the uſual time: and, at their departure, gave them an order from the court of Pekin for carriages, lodgings, and proviſions, through every diſtrict in their way to Canton.

'One would be glad to know, upon what Chriſtian ſhore any ſhipwrecked crew could have met with ſuch humane and generous treatment. What ſtill the more heightens the merit of this noble behaviour, it is well known that the Chineſe are not at all fond of trading with the Europeans; and it is probable enough, that ſome other eaſtern nations may, in time, become as ſhy of them, from experience, as the ſagacious Chineſe have always been from theory and ſpeculation.

'As generous deeds do not appear every day, even in the moſt ſenſible, the moſt virtuous, and moſt magnificent of all poſſible ages; there is room here to pay ſome proper reſpect to a late act of humanity in the preſent Emperor of Morocco; which the following extract from his letter to the Grand Maſter of Malta will explain:

"In the name of God, the ſole Almighty. To the Prince of Malta, Grand-Maſter of the Religion of St. John, and to all his Council, the Emperor of Morocco, Fez, Mequinez, &c. wiſhes health and proſperity. In compaſſion of ſeveral Tuſcan ſlaves, who have long been in my poſſeſſion, and have never yet been demanded of me, I ſend them all to be preſented to you by my ſecretary Abladi Salciti: by this means, procuring myſelf at once the double ſatisfaction of making you a preſent, and of reſtoring liberty to thoſe unfortunate people. If you had no captives of ours in your poſſeſſion, I ſhould deſire nothing of you in return; but as I know that you have, I ſhall with great pleaſure receive ſuch as you may be pleaſed to ſend me."

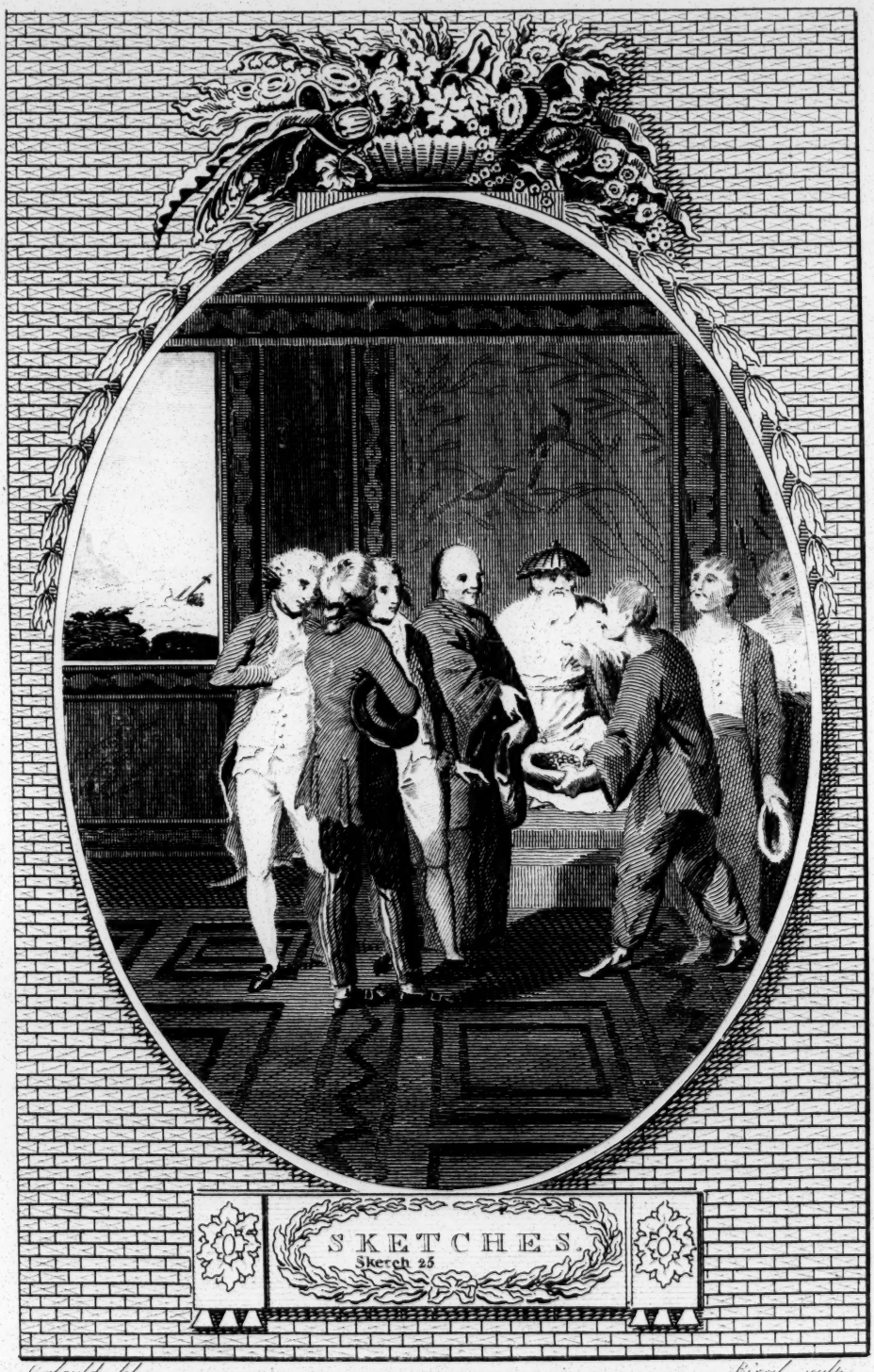
Along with this letter the Emperor ſent thirty-ſeven Chriſtian ſlaves; and that the Grand-Maſter of Malta returned exactly the ſame number of Mahometan captives, muſt have been owing to his having had no more.

SKETCH XXVI.

OF FABLE AND HISTORY.

FOR want of intelligence, or candour, or perhaps of both, there is often too great a mixture of fable in hiſtory. On the other hand, it is not unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that there is more true hiſtory amongſt the fables of the ancient poets than we generally imagine. And to compare the hiſtorian with the poet, the latter ſeems not only the moſt entertaining, but the moſt inſtructive, the moſt ingenious, and moſt honeſt of the two; as he does not even expect your belief of every great and wonderful event or action he relates. The mixture of evident undiſguiſed improbalities, and what the critics I think call the *marvellous* in Homer, has, in too great a meaſure, weakened his credit as an hiſtorian. Though even in this capacity he has, perhaps, ſhewn himſelf much ſuperior, in candour and impartiality, to many at leaſt of our modern hiſtory-writers. In ſupport of this obſervation, I can hardly think it neceſſary to take notice, that he has in general repreſented more worthy, amiable, and heroic characters, amongſt the Trojan heroes, than in thoſe of his own country.

* Three Tale are equal in value to one pound ſterling.



Corbould del. Bissel sculp.

Published as the Act directs, by John Walker, June 20. 1787.

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His commentators, I am told, have here and there been ſtruck with ſome glimpſes of true hiſtory in the Iliad and the Odyſſey. And indeed I ſhould imagine, that his narration in each of thoſe poems was built upon ſolid facts; enlivened with fable only to make it the more entertaining and wonderful; and, with the heightening of every ornament to exalt an hiſtory into a poem. One particular circumſtance, which I don't know that any of theſe commentators has obſerved in this light, ſeems ſtrongly to favour ſuch a conjecture. The hero of the Odyſſey, after having, with great bravery and addreſs, demoliſhed the profligate ſuitors, puts the poor female attendants, who might have been paſſively concered in the riots of his houſe, upon the ſhocking office of removing the bodies of their ſlaughtered lovers: and as ſoon as they have, by his orders, ſwabbed the bloody hall, he hangs them all up in a ſtring againſt the wall of the court. Homer could never have *made* the hero of his poem guilty of ſuch an indecent unmanly piece of cruelty; but found himſelf obliged, by his attachment to true hiſtory, to record it as a real atchievement of the * *hard-heared* Ulyſſes.

SKETCH XXVII.

THE STUDY OF HISTORY.

HISTORY is, in general, an uncomforable fatiguing journey through a flat inſipid country; a tale too long for human patience. And after all, for want of intelligence and candour in the writers of hiſtory, you can ſeldom truſt to it's veracity. What different accounts are given of events that have happened even in our own times! For my part, I find myſelf much diſpoſed to be an infidel as to many diſputed points of hiſtory. A battle is an *affair* of ſuch confuſion, that few, even of thoſe who have been concerned it it, can explain it's circumſtances, or fairly recollect them. It is ſometimes as much as you can do to diſcover which army gained the victory. But what is yet more ſurpriſing, it has happened, that ſome very conſpicuous characters in hiſtory have been ſo falſely repreſented, that the moſt worthleſs and contemptible continue to be regarded with admiration; while the beſt and the moſt amiable are conſidered with deteſtation and abhorrence.

A lively ſpirited relation of a formidable conſpiracy, an important revolution, or any other intereſting event, may afford a very agreeable entertainment. But human life is too ſhort; and it requires all the phlegmatic patience of a well-fed lawyer, to attend to a long, drawling, inſipid ſtory, if it was ever ſo true. Livy is far from being a heavy, loitering, dozing, ſtory-teller. His ſubject is enriched with a great variety of entertaining events. Notwithſtanding his extravagant profuſion of coxcomical ornaments, in very good ſpeeches made by himſelf for people who never ſpoke them, he diſpatches the affairs of a prodigious empire, throughout a whole century of perpetual action, in much leſs than half the number of pages than one inſignificant reign of a king of France or of England has coſt to ſome laborious compilers. And yet, for all the ſpirit, elegance, and dignity of his narration, perhaps there are not many now alive who have had perſeverance enough to attend the great Latin hiſtorian to the end of his tale; even ſhortened as it is by the injuries of chance and time.

So much for hiſtory as an amuſement. As to it's uſe towards qualifying a ſtateſman for the management of publick affairs, I take it to be very inconſiderable. A general acquaintance with the hiſtory of his own country is perhaps enough for a *prime miniſter*; and ſome, I am told, have made a tolerable ſhift to ſtumble on for many years without even that. With a proper ſhare of ſagacity, reſolution, activity, and addreſs, an honeſt ſtateſman might, in the moſt troubleſome times, do great things for his country; though he had never turned over one leaf of either

* *Durus Ulyſſes.*

Livy,

Livy, Tacitus, or Salluſt. Mean time, alluſions and references to antient hiſtory have long been ſucceſsfully employed to give ſome credit, with an air of conſequence and dignity, to the deluſive lucubrations of your ſtate empiricks, and their venal journeymen. And this ſeems to be the only advantage which our ſtateſmen have ever yet drawn from the ſtudy of hiſtory.

SKETCH XXVIII.

OF FAME.

THERE is as much variety of taſte in this capital article of happineſs, as in any thing elſe. For there are multitudes who would be aſhamed of a virtuous renown, and proud of what they would think a glorious villainy. An inhuman, diſſolute, abandoned villain will naturally admire the character of a Tiberius, a Nero, or a Domitian; and perhaps, without much affectation, deſpiſe that of a Titus or a Trajan.

If you are not perfectly indifferent as to the good opinion of the mob, you are one of them yourſelf. *Their* opinion, as far as all politick views are out of the queſtion, is much below the conſideration of every man who has any tolerable ſhare of underſtanding. But he who is above the opinion of the better and more ſenſible part of mankind; he who does not regard it with the utmoſt reverence; is moſt certainly capable of every thing that is baſe and villainous.

SKETCH XXIX.

OF REVENGE.

THE gratification of this paſſion in the hands of a ſenſible man, a perſon of moderation and humanity, will hardly ever, in cold blood, exceed the bounds of an exact retaliation. So far I ſhould reckon it juſt, and a proper ſupplement to the laws; which afford no redreſs in many caſes of the moſt inſupportable injuſtice. I could perhaps forgive an act of villainy which is not cogniſable by the laws—but I don't chuſe it; it is againſt my principles; it is weak, impolitick, and abſurd. In ſuch caſes, you have nothing but the fearful apprehenſions of your own reſentment, to keep raſcals in awe.

Every act of juſt vengeance is *a terror to evil doers*; and contributes ſomewhat to the ſafety of honeſt and inoffenſive people: perhaps it might even to the ſtability of government; if it ſhould ever become ſo deſpicably weak, ſo tottering and paralytick, as tamely to bear the inſults of an abandoned, ſtupid, cowardly populace.

SKETCH XXX.

OF BLASPHEMY.

THERE is a ſet of vain crazy mortals, I was going to ſay half-witted fellows, but that would be too great a compliment: fools, that attempt to ſhine by talking blaſphemy. Good God! it would be a ſmall triumph to outſhine all thoſe geniuſes in that ſtile. I fear the thunder at leaſt as little as any of thoſe indecent reprobates; but I cannot be ſo ſtupidly ungrateful, as to inſult the adorable Author of my being, and all the pleaſures of my life. There ſurely needs very little wit to ridicule the ideal God of the vulgar; who conceive the ſtupendous Creator of the univerſe; the Almighty Spirit, who has produced every thing that is good, great and beautiful; to be a teſty, ill-natured old man, with a long beard.

After all, to give the devil his due; a knave, who is always at bottom, a fool, as indeed moſt of us are, is of all animals the leaſt unpardonable for complaining of his Maker.

SKETCH XXXI.

THE ORIGIN OF EVIL.

WHAT we call Evil, as well as every thing that is good, moſt certainly ſprung from the great Fountain of all exiſtence. Heaven, which gave us corn, wine, and oil, ſent us alſo war, famine, and peſtilence. The moſt pernicious things have their uſes; and the rankeſt poiſons, ſkilfully managed, prove the moſt powerful medicines.

In moral life, a perfect character would be a monſter; at leaſt I ſhould hardly chuſe the ſociety of a man who was above all human weakneſſes. The amiable medium of virtue, to the beſt of my apprehenſion, lies between a rigid, ſevere, minute, exact, over ſcrupulous ſanctity, and a diſſolute profligacy. It avoids the one, as diſagreeable, uncomfortable, and forbidding; the other, as indecent, ſhocking, and contemptible.

I humbly conceive, that there cannot be much pleaſure in a ſtate that is not, in one ſhape or another, obnoxious to pain; and that none but the Almighty himſelf can enjoy an uninterrupted and immutable happineſs. The heathen elyſium has nothing to recommend it but eaſe and tranquillity; green fields and ſerene weather; which one would wiſh ſometimes to change for a ſtorm. The happy heroes there are a parcel of mere loungers; inſipid murderers of time; or rather, uſeleſs trifling waſters of eternity. It is difficult to imagine any thing ſo tireſome as their condition. The Mahometan paradiſe is flattering indeed as to one article of pleaſure; but that is hardly enough—for even love itſelf may, once in forty or fifty years, ſigh for a truce of a few hours; at leaſt for a little variety. Without variety, life is inſipid in this world: and the happieſt ſituation in the next may poſſibly enough be ſomewhat expoſed to diſagreeable rubs; that it may not ſink into a ſtate of inſipid diſſipation, or ſupine inactivity. You all know what horrible riots and combuſtions broke out in heaven at the time that Old Satan, or his Sulphureous Highneſs, (according to the title with which he has lately been dignified by a pulpit orator) loſt his wits, and rebelled againſt almighty power. What ſquabbles may have happened there ſince, Heaven only knows; as all hiſtorical intelligence from thence has been ſhut up ever ſince the ceſſation of inſpired writing.

In ſhort, the Chriſtian Hades, with a tolerable mixture of variety, would be a more eligible ſituation, than either the heathen Elyſium, or the Paradiſe of Mahomet. To fry for ever under the dog-days muſt be horrible. But with a reaſonable variety of cool air, freſh ſpring-water, iced cream, plenty of good Rheniſh, Old Hock, Moſelle, Cyder, Burgundy, and ſome other comfortable things, one might make a tolerable ſhift *there*; or even in Jamaica itſelf.

But to be very ſerious; without a certain mixture of what we call Evil, the beautiful and entertaining variety which the Almighty Creator exhibits both in the natural and moral world, muſt have been imperfect. If this mixture was not neceſſary to the beauty and perfection of nature, it muſt have been unavoidable. For it is beyond the power of God himſelf to perform things naturally impoſſible. There are numberleſs things, both in the natural and moral world, which no more depend upon the will of God, than that two and two make four; or that a ſphere is more capacious than any other figure under the ſame extent of ſurface. A proportionable ſenſibility of pain, muſt, I ſuppoſe, unavoidable attend that of pleaſure. God Almighty has given you ſenſe enough to take care of yourſelf; but, to be perfectly ſecured from burning or drowning, you muſt have a world without either fire or water.

To conclude; if *the ways of God to man* needed any *vindication*, why may we not preſume that, ſuppoſing a mixture of *real* evil to be unavoidable, the Almighty ſhould chuſe to admit ſome evil, rather than that there ſhould be no good; to expoſe his creatures to ſome chance of pain and miſery, rather than that there ſhould be no creation; rather than that infinite ſpace, the ſcene of his ſtupendouſly magnificent and moſt beautiful works, ſhould for ever remain waſte, empty, and deſolate?

SKETCH XXXII.

OF FASCINATION.

THE language of the eyes is ſo expreſſive, as to be underſtood at the firſt glance. But the art by which the rattle-ſnake, and others of the ſerpent family, can ogle a hare into their formidable jaws, or,

Drink from the midſt of heaven the ill-pois'd lark,

might deſerve ſome conſideration. Some honeſt ſenſible naturaliſts appear confident of the fact. For my part, though I have never yet ſeen it, ſtrange as it is, I have no right to ſay it is impoſſible. I can conceive a man in ſuch a ſtate of mind and circumſtances, as to find himſelf tempted to do the very thing that would give him the utmoſt horror. That moſt unhappy madman Caligula, they ſay, would often tell Cæſonia, of whom he was ſo paſſionately fond, *How eaſily could I ſtrike off this charming head of thine!*

I recollect, upon this occaſion, ſome lines in a poet, who of all mankind had the moſt intimate acquaintance with human nature.—

What if it tempt you towards the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful ſummit of the cliff,
That beetles o'er it's baſe into the ſea—

The very place puts *Toys* of deſperation
Without more motive into every brain,
That looks ſo many fathoms to the ſea,
And hears it roar beneath.

If I remember right, Montaigne, who does not ſeem to have been of a melancholy complexion, ſomewhere ſays, that when he found himſelf upon the top of ſome hideous precipice in his mountainous neighbourhood, he had often felt an impulſe to leap down. The ſhocking fate of a young lady, who, according to report, within theſe two or three years, while ſhe was obſerving the dreadful figure of a large ſhark, ſlipt out of the cabin-widow into the ſea, might poſſibly enough have been owing to ſome deſperate impulſe of this kind.

As one would do any thing reaſonable to reſcue the memory of a great man from unjuſt reproach, I think it impoſſible that Empedocles could have been ſo very weak, as by a ſly ſlip out of this world, either to hope or wiſh to paſs for one of *the immortal gods*. The hollow ſurface might have failed him; he might have ſlipt in by the mere chance of an unlucky ſtep; he might have been ſuffocated by the ſulphureous ſteam; or, on the brink of the burning gulph, he might naturally enough have grown giddy; or have been ſeized with ſuch *Toys of deſperation*, as Shakeſpeare talks of. But neither envy, malice, nor jealouſy, have the leaſt acquaintance with generoſity or candour.

SKETCH XXXIII.

THE INFLUENCE OF CLIMATE UPON GENIUS.

THERE are people ſo bigoted to ſome particular theory, to falſe opinions and prejudices, as indolently to ſurrender even their own ſenſations to them. There are in this iſland ſome renegadoes abſurd enough to tell you, that Britain lies at too great a diſtance from the ſun to produce any Genius. It is really paying too much attention to ſuch taſteleſs, ignorant, ſuperficial connoiſſeurs, to aſk them, what country in Europe, what climate the neareſt to the ſun, has diſplayed a richer bloom of Genius, in almoſt any department, than has ſpontaneouſly ſprung up in this foggy iſland; without even any kind foſtering influences from the ſuperior powers—excepting thoſe alone of Heaven and Nature. In what kind of Genius is this iſland inferior to any nation under the ſun! How many Geniuſes has the happy climate of Italy produced, in any ſhape, ſince the days of Auguſtus? The genial fruitful latitude of Greece has now lain quite fallow for near two thouſand years. Spain ſhould be aſhamed

to boaſt of, or even to own her noble, generous, her delightful Cervantes, whom ſhe pitifully ſuffered to ſtarve. But what great Geniuſes has ever the warm climate of Africa produced? from the coaſt of Barbary to that of Guinea? from the mouth of the Nile to the Cape of Good-Hope?

There are perhaps only two arts in which this iſland yields to any climate, however near the ſun. It appears that the vaineſt Romans did not pretend to vie with the Greeks in ſtatuary. Yet, what artiſts in that way has modern Italy produced ſuperior, or even equal to thoſe of old Rome?—Very few, I believe, and if it was not for Michael Angelo, perhaps one might venture to ſay none; though Italy, I ſuppoſe, lies as near the ſun as it did eighteen hundred years ago. If the Engliſh have not hitherto excelled in painting, it may be imputed to circumſtances that need no explanation. But, notwithſtanding all the obſtacles to true Genius in this iſland, it has, within theſe few years, loſt a painter of ſingular excellence; as natural and expreſſive, I'll venture to ſay it, in the comic and familiarly moral ſtyle, as Raphael was in the ſerious and ſublime. And you may wait many centuries before ſuch another flower blows in *any* climate. I reckon that ſtill, *even in this age*, our iſland may boaſt of ſeveral geniuſes, who, for inſtance, in portrait perhaps excel every painter in Europe ſince the days of Vandyke: to whom unprejudiced poſterity may find them at leaſt equal; ſome perhaps ſuperior. We have ſome too who are admirable in landſkip.—But theſe geniuſes are ſtill alive; and ſome of them may be ſeen at a coffee-houſe, where they look much like other people. A hundred years hence, a connoiſſeur may probably enough wiſh to make a journey of a thouſand miles to ſee them; and would be glorioufly happy, on his return home, to tell his neighbours he had ſhook them by the hand. As to hiſtory itſelf, beſide ſome promiſing ſpecimens of it at home, perhaps even this barren age has produced a genius, not indeed of Britiſh growth; unpatronized, and at preſent almoſt unknown; who may live to aſtoniſh, to terrify, and delight all Europe. But true genius is ſuch an uncommon production of nature, and is ſo much ſuperior to all quackiſh arts of recommending itſelf, that when it does appear, it is no wonder that a generation of people without taſte do not know it.

Genius may ſhoot up in a land quite inhoſpitable to it; it may perhaps even bloſſom in the moſt ungenial ſeaſon. But the roſe-buſh that diſplays it's bluſhing honours in the face of the ſurly uncomfortable eaſt wind, muſt have ſprung from a root of no ſmall vigour. In a certain iſland, the foſtering indulgences and kind attention which the narciſſus, the gilly-flower, the tuberoſe, the Cape jeſſamin, and all the delicate flowers that adorn the garden, deſerve and require; are moſt abſurdly and perniciouſly beſtowed upon ragwort, jack of the hedge, prieſt's what d'ye call it, biſhops weed, bearsfoot, nightſhade, and henbane.

SKETCH XXXIV.

THE TASTE OF THE PRESENT AGE.

AMONGST many other diſtinguiſhing marks of a ſtupid age, a bad crop of men, I have been told that the taſte in writing was never ſo falſe as at preſent. If it is really ſo, it may perhaps be owing to a prodigious ſwarm of inſipid traſhy writers: amongſt whom there are ſome who pretend to dictate to the public as critics, though they hardly ever fail to be miſtaken. But their dogmatic impudence, and ſomething like a ſcientific air of talking the moſt palpable nonſenſe, impoſes upon great numbers of people, who really poſſeſs a conſiderable ſhare of natural Taſte; of which at the ſame time they are ſo little conſcious, as to ſuffer themſelves paſſively to be miſled by thoſe blundering guides.

A Taſte worth cultivating is to be improved and preſerved by reading *only* the beſt writers. But whoever, after peruſing a ſatire of Horace, even in the dulleſt Engliſh tranſlation, can reliſh the ſtupid abuſe of a blackguard rhymſter, may as well indulge the natural depravity of his Taſte, and riot for life upon diſtiller's grains.

But the Taſte in writing is not, cannot

not be worſe, than it is in muſic, as well as in all theatrical entertainments. In architecture, indeed, there are ſome elegant and magnificent works ariſing, at a very proper time, to reſtore the nation to ſome credit with it's neighbours in this article; after it's having been expoſed to ſuch repeated diſgraces by a triumvirate of aukward clumſy piles, that are not aſhamed to ſhew their ſtupid heads in the neighbourhood of Whitehall: and one more, that ought to be demoliſhed, if it was for no other reaſon but to reſtore the view of an elegant church, which has now for many years been buried alive behind the Manſion Houſe.

It is, indeed, ſome comfort, that while Taſte and Genius happen to be very falſe and impotent in moſt of the fine arts, they are not ſo in all. The arts of gardening, particularly, and the elegant plan of a farm, have of late years diſplayed themſelves in a few ſpots to greater advantage in England, than perhaps ever before in any part of Europe. This is, indeed, very far from being univerſal; and ſome gardens, admired and celebrated ſtill, are ſo ſmoothly regular, ſo over-planted, and ſo crouded with affected, impertinent, ridiculous ornaments of temples, ruins, pyramids; obeliſks, ſtatues, and a thouſand other contemptible whims, that a continuation of the ſame ground, in it's rude natural ſtate, is infinitely more delightful. You muſt often have ſeen fine ſituations ruined with coſtly pretences to *improvement*. The moſt noble and romantic ſituation of any gardens I have ſeen, is near Chepſtow: and the gentleman who poſſeſſes that delightful ſpot, has ſhewn great judgment and a true taſte, in meddling ſo little with Nature, where ſhe wanted ſo little help.

This is one happy inſtance of an admirable ſituation, where nature is modeſtly and judiciouſly improved, not hurt, by art. An oppoſite inſtance of what art, ſkill, and taſte, may produce, without any particular advantages of ground or ſituation, is moſt agreeably diſplayed in the royal gardens at Kew. There you find an extent of flat ground, ſo eaſily, agreeably, and unaffectedly broken, that you would think it impoſſible to alter it but to the worſe. To paſs without any notice the agreeable and the elegant pieces of architecture, which without crouding adorn thoſe delightful gardens, perhaps there is not a phyſic-garden in Europe where any botaniſt can be more agreeably entertained, as to the variety of curious plants. But there is ſomething new, as far as I know, and particularly ingenious here, in the diſpoſition and menagement of them. Thoſe that naturally delight in the rocks, and the dry hungry ſoil, are here planted upon ridges of artificial rockwork; where they ſhew all the luxuriance of vegetation that they could amongſt the Alps, the Pyrenees, or the Andes. While a very different tribe, the Aquatics, diſplay themſelves in a large ciſtern, where they are conſtantly ſupplied with their beſt and moſt natural nouriſhment, the rain water, conveyed to them from the eves of the richeſt green-houſe I have ever ſeen.

SKETCH XXXV.

OF THE DRAMATIC UNITIES.

I Suppoſe few architects will deny that walls, doors, windows, a roof and chimneys, are neceſſary to a convenient habitation. In my opinion, a ſtrict adherence to the three Unities, as they are eſtabliſhed upon the firm foundation of good ſenſe, is not leſs neceſſary in the ſtructure of both Tragedy and Comedy; which otherways, eſpecially as repreſented upon the ſtage, are irregular, ſlovenly, blundering, abſurd, and improbable. And that even *we* are not ſhocked at the daily treſpaſſes againſt them, is owing to cuſtom and Shakeſpeare. But it requires ſo much art to fill up five acts of a play with the buſineſs of one ſingle intereſting event; without one ſcene that is not neceſſary to forward it; without the leaſt change of place; and without exceeding the time of repreſentation; or even the compaſs of twelve hours, which is permitted by the courteſy of the critics; that it is no wonder moſt of our dramatic writers affect to deſpiſe rules ſo difficult to practiſe.

The three great French dramatic poets, Corneille, Racine, and Moliere, have in this article been much more ſucceſsful

ceſsful than the Engliſh: amongſt whom, if you except Ben Johnſon in three or four of his capital pieces, I am afraid we ſhall find very few who have built upon a regular plan; which is exactly the ſame thing to a play, as compoſition is to a hiſtory in painting. Shakeſpeare, indeed, without one perfect plan, has perhaps excelled all other dramatic poets as to detached ſcenes. But he was a wonder!—His deep knowledge of his man nature, his prodigious variety of fancy and invention, and of characters drawn with the ſtrongeſt, trueſt, and moſt exquiſite ſtrokes, oblige you to forget his moſt violent irregularities. However, to compare two ſtupendous geniuſes in different departments; Shakeſpeare, for this mere diſregard of plan, appears leſs perfect than Raphael; who has heightened the trueſt and moſt maſterly expreſſions in his various characters, by the advantages of a compoſition the moſt auguſt and ſuperb imaginable, where it was proper; and always the moſt elegant, eaſy, happy, and natural.

The Samſon Agoniſtes of Milton was, it ſeems, recommended by a celebrated prelate to Mr. Pope, as a performance that he might eaſily mould into a perfect model of Tragedy.—A moſt deſperate taſk!—For, beſides that the dialogue in Samſon is for the greateſt part dry, metaphyſical, pedantic, and reads like a ſtarched, laborious, ſlaviſh tranſlation from Euripides; I cannot help thinking, with all due deference to Milton and the B—— of Rocheſter, that the Samſon Agoniſtes is no more to a Tragedy, than a long Farce of one act would be to a Comedy. For the ſtage, if I remember right, is never once cleared of the perſons introduced from the firſt ſcene to the laſt.

SKETCH XXXVI.

OF TRAGEDY AND COMEDY.

NOtwithſtanding the opinion of ſome old critic, that a perfect Tragedy is the nobleſt production of which the human wit is capable; it has long been a ſubject of learned diſpute, whether a perfect Comedy was not the more difficult undertaking of the two. The great majority of judges, who are not always in the right, have, I believe, ſtill given the preference to Comedy in this reſpect. They tell you, that as Comedy is a repreſentation of common life, and incidents that are expoſed to daily obſervation, it muſt be a work of more difficult execution; ſince moſt people truly are qualified to judge of what is natural in common life. But are we not equally judges of natural expreſſions in caſes of the moſt tragical diſtreſs? even in the moſt exalted perſonages? What ſhould hinder?—Do the paſſions operate differently in ſimilar ſituations, according to the different ranks of mankind? A king or an emperor may, upon occaſion, be as much enraged as a chafed dray-man; only he'll expreſs his anger with more dignity, and in more decent language.

It is, no doubt, equally the buſineſs of Tragedy and Comedy to repreſent life and characters naturally. And we have as good a right to expect true pictures of nature from the one as from the other.

Mean time, I imagine the working up of a good Tragedy to be by many degrees the more difficult and arduous taſk of the two. Except you think the ſublime productions of Raphael required leſs genius than thoſe of Hogarth; whom I would never be underſtood to mention but in terms of great eſteem and admiration. How many tolerable comedies have we ſeen for one tragedy; in which the paſſions are naturally repreſented, and expreſſed with propriety and ſpirit? Mouthing, big words, turgid unnatural language, and affected ſentiments, are nothing to the purpoſe; inſtead of moving the paſſions, they only create contempt and diſguſt in people of proper feelings. I would aſk, How many very good comic romances have appeared in the European languages for one tolerable epic poem? Let me aſk again, How many excellent comedians of both ſexes have appeared upon the Engliſh ſtage, within the memory of many now living, for one that has excelled in Tragedy?

As to what Moliere ſays upon this ſubject, I think it is in his *Critique de l' Ecole des Femmes*, it amounts to no more

more than this; that it is much eaſier to write a bad Tragedy than a good Comedy; which I ſuppoſe will be readily granted.

After all, I believe it muſt be allowed, that a loud, ranting, declamatory Tragedy, in which nature is perpetually kept at the truncheon's end; with the aſſiſtance eſpecially of magnificent dreſſes, changes of amuſing ſcenes, altars, ſacrifices, proceſſions, publick audiences of ambaſſadors, and ſuch other mechanical ornaments as are eaſily introduced; is much more likely to impoſe upon the eyes and ears of the multitude, than a cold inſipid Comedy.

SKETCH XXXVII.

OF THE CARELESS HUSBAND.

AS the Careleſs Huſband, though it has not appeared upon the ſtage perhaps once theſe thirty years, ſtill poſſeſſes the firſt rank amongſt our modern comedies, in the opinion of many thouſands who have never either read it or ſeen it repreſented; I had ſome time ſince the curioſity to give it a ſecond peruſal; becauſe, when I read it many years ago, I could not conceive how it came to be ſo particularly admired. And now, it does not by any means ſtrike me as the beſt even of the few modern Engliſh comedies with which I have any acquaintance. Sir Charles, the hero, the fine gentleman of the play, behaves rather brutally, and even with a needleſs, abſurd cruelty, to poor Edging, impertinent as ſhe is. What is ſtill worſe; in the tender ſcene between him and Lady Eaſy, where all art and inſincerity ought to be generouſly thrown aſide, he is diſingenuous enough to make a merit of parting with a miſtreſs he was tired of, and from whom he had juſt diſengaged himſelf. That return of affection to a wife, who was once become indifferent to him, ſeems hardly natural, to a man at leaſt of Sir Charles's character; and L. Eaſy has no great reaſon to depend much upon it. As to L. Betty Modiſh; ſuch a flippant coquette does not promiſe at all to be a happy match for ſuch an honeſt ſincere inamorato as L. Lovemore; but I hope he will never truſt her too long out of his ſight; not even with his friend and officious match-maker, Sir Charles. In ſhort, Sir Charles is no more than a mere man of pleaſure, of great indifference and *non chalance*; much ſuch another as Colley was himſelf: for I had the honour to be a little acquainted with Mr. Cibber; who, beſides his abilities as a writer, and the ſingular variety of his powers as an actor, was to the laſt one of the moſt agreeable, chearful, and beſt-humoured men, you would ever wiſh to converſe with. But to return to Sir Charles: the tenderneſs he expreſſes in the forementioned ſcene, ſhews a change of character too ſudden and too violent to be natural; and is contrived only to ſerve a purpoſe in the play.

The ſudden change of character in Lady Townley, in the Provoked Huſband, is not leſs unnatural than that of Sir Charles Eaſy. I have good authority for it, that Sir John Vanbrugh, who left the play unfiniſhed, never intended any ſuch reformation. And of all the dramatic poets who have appeared in this century, Vanbrugh ſeems to have had the trueſt knowledge of human nature: if you except any, it can be none but Fielding; whoſe admirable Parody upon the modern Engliſh Tragedies, might alone be ſufficient to procure him a high rank amongſt the Comic Poets.

SKETCH XXXVIII.

OF GLOOMY WRITING.

I Have read ſo little for many years upon any ſubject that did not immediately concern the political ſtate of the nation; of which every journeyman weaver, taylor, barber, every porter, chairman, coachman, drayman, carman, ſhoe-cleaner, and chimney-ſweeper, in London, ought to make himſelf maſter,

for

for the good and ſafety of the whole; that I am grown quite out of acquaintance with the delights of thoſe writers they call the Claſſics. But, to recollect ſome juvenile impreſſions, I uſed to think that in the works of the beſt poets, there is generally an air of chearfulneſs and gaiety, wherever their ſubject in any degree admits of it. The inferior geniuſes are either inſipidly ſerene, or, when they affect the ſerious and ſublime, it is heavy, gloomy, and melancholy. Virgil is like the ſun, bright and chearful. Lucan is a ſubterraneous vault on fire; and when he wants to breathe the open air, would be the Stygian lake in a ſtorm, if he could. There is ſuch a gloomy ſolemnity in moſt of the writers of that age, with whom I have ever had any acquaintance, that you would think the ſun had always waded through a ſky of blood in the days of thoſe inhuman emperors.

SKETCH XXXIX.

OF A LINE IN LUCRETIUS.

IT cannot be leſs than thirty years ſince I have looked into Lucretius; and of the few lines in his elaborate poem that ſtick to my memory, there is one—

Nempe aliæ quoque ſunt; nempe la. ſine vixi-
mus ante—

that if it was not for other lines and one particular anecdote, would almoſt tempt one to imagine he had never been in love. What conſolation, I beſeech you, can it give a lover dying of his wounds, to tell him—'There are others as fair as 'ſhe; and you lived happily enough be-'fore you ever ſaw her.' Very true; but this is mere ſophiſtry, and nothing at all to the purpoſe. 'For,' ſays the intoxicated lover, 'I cannot live without this 'particular ſweet creature: of all the 'ſex, ſhe is the only one that can make 'me compleatly happy.' How ſoon, after poſſeſſing this bewitching angel, he may wiſh to get rid of her, is a queſtion not much to the purpoſe at preſent.

SKETCH XL.

OF THE GOOSE-PHOENIX.

THIS is, perhaps, one of the higheſt curioſities that has ever appeared even at court, either in bag-wig or tye. But as he is rather out of his place here, and deſerves a particular deſcription, I intend to exhibit him in my Natural Hiſtory, which I am preparing for the preſs, under the article of *Strange Birds*.

SKETCH XLI.

OF SINGING.

TALKING of birds—Pray, how d'ye reliſh the Italian Singers?—Why really not ſo much as many *pretend* to do: a great many, a prodigious multitude of all ranks, who reſign their own ſenſations to other people, and dare neither *hear* nor *ſee* for themſelves; who dare not even *eat* or *drink* for themſelves. For my part, I am ſincere enough to own, that the Singers at the opera ſeldom give me much pleaſure; and leaſt of all while they are warbling out a note to the length of a league. Beſides that I am in pain for their throats, I feel a contemptuous diſguſt, and a ſtrange diſagreeable ſenſation of ſhame both for them and the audience, who never fail to acknowledge thoſe flouriſhes with the loudeſt applauſe. But in almoſt all Singing, I cannot help lamenting what I think a moſt material imperfection. A ſweet tune, well ſung, gives a raviſhing grace

even

even to lines, that when you come to read them, you are ſurprized to find how flat and inſipid they are, and often how nonſenſical. What I complain of is, that few Singers pronounce the words diſtinctly enough to be underſtood. They might almoſt as well ſing *Fal al de ral* for ever and ever.

I have reaſon to ſuſpect, that the moſt exquiſite powers in this way, for want of aſſurance in thoſe who poſſeſs them, are ſometimes loſt, and remain quite unknown, except to a few of their moſt familiar friends. This diffidence is only to be regretted. But I can find no excuſe for thoſe volunteers in muſic, who have got that ſilly, impertinent, diſguſting, provoking habit of humming a tune to themſelves in company, my dear honey; and at piquet, cribbage, or quadrille, even at *whiſt* itſelf, ſing over their cards.

SKETCH LXII.

OF A VULGAR ERROR.

I Have always conſidered it as a ſelf-evident abſurdity, to imagine that the Scottiſh tunes were compoſed by an Italian fidler. But I own that my opinion upon this ſubject has begun to totter, ever ſince it was diſcovered that the real author of Oſſian's Poems was one Korah Sukkubbit, Eſq, an idle drunken fellow, who ſome ten or twelve thouſand years ago, lived by making and mending of Jews-harps at the borough of Gomorrah, in the county of Paleſtine. Good God, how provoking this is!—Bleſs your ears! the greateſt part of the Scotch, Welch, and Iriſh tunes, were compoſed long before the Italians, or even the Flemiſh, knew any thing of muſic. Excepting Corelli, Pergoleſi, and perhaps one or two more diſtinguiſhable maſters of that charming art, the Italian compoſers have ſeldom aſpired at any thing beyond mere mechanical harmony; in which any one who has a tolerable ear may ſucceed. But to expreſs the paſſions is a different affair: it is one of the greateſt powers that belongs to true genius: which happens to be a very uncommon gift of nature.

Handel was in general a noiſy overbearing bully in muſic: ſometimes indeed, but not often, pathetick—yet ſtill charming, as far as mere harmony goes. But it was not in him, ſtill leſs in David Rizzio, a mere old fidler, who only executed what other people had compoſed, to have even imitated, with any ſucceſs, the Scottiſh tunes; whether melancholy or gay; whether amorous, martial, or paſtoral; in a ſtyle highly original, and moſt feelingly expreſſive of all the paſſions, from the ſweeteſt to the moſt terrible. Who was it that threw out thoſe dreadful wild expreſſions of diſtraction and melancholy in *Lady Culroſs's Dream?* an old compoſition, now, I am afraid, loſt, perhaps, becauſe it was almoſt *too terrible for the ear*. I'll venture to ſwear that David Rizzio was as innocent as any lamb of all ſuch frantic horrors.

SKETCH XLIII.

OF SOME OTHER VULGAR ERRORS.

SOME people ſeem to wonder that *Stupidity and Malice* ſhould meet. So far from being oppoſite qualities, they are, for the moſt part, huſband and wife. And why ſhould you attempt to ſeparate whom the devil has joined?

Even of fools afraid.—Is this a juſt reproach? Pray, what animal is ſo troubleſome or dangerous as a fool, whether he is your enemy or your friend?

Why are *Magnanimity and Meekneſs, Wit and Wiſdom*, ſuppoſed ſuch extraordinary combinations?—Good ſenſe is ſurely the ſolid foundation of true wit: and the trueſt magnanimity is above all the little turbulence of paſſion; which is ſometimes affected to diſguiſe fear.

A bad heart is by ſome people ſuppoſed almoſt inſeparable from an able head. It is quite the contrary: for where the heart is falſe, the head is never ſound. A fool may be honeſt; but the moſt plauſible knave never yet poſſeſſed a ſound underſtanding. In a word, the leſs moral a man is, the nearer he approaches to an aſs.

Mere vivacity is every day miſtaken for wit: and moſt people, when you talk of a Wit, ſuppoſe it a vain, pert, briſk, impudent, ill-natured creature, that ſays ſuch things as would be pardonable only to an impertinent child. True wit is ſeldom or never petulant: it would rather ſuppreſs even a good joke, than give the leaſt uneaſineſs to any perſon that is not a fair object of ſatire.

A ſerious diſpoſition and a reliſh of pleaſure are reckoned oppoſite to one another by the generality of fools; who have not reflection enough to obſerve that the extaſies of pleaſure are of all things the moſt ſerious. This all ſenſible women know. The fools of the ſex, who are ſometimes as voluptuous as their betters, ſeem often to be out of this ſecret. But pray who is ſo grave, or ſhews ſuch a ſolemn front, as the huſband of the herd? The wether is an inſipid whiffling fellow to the ram: whoſe dignified gravity abates, and becomes leſs diſtinguiſhable, as ſoon as the genial ſeaſon is over. And I have been told by ſome ladies of very good ſenſe and conſiderable experience, that the grave rake is the man.

SKETCH XLIV.

OF CIVILITY.

A Few days ago, upon accidentally opening an old book, I found the following reflection: 'Incivility is not 'a vice of the ſoul, but the effect of 'many vices; of ridiculous vanity, of 'ignorance, idleneſs, ſtupidity, giddineſs, contempt of others, of ill-nature, 'and jealouſy.'

This I take to be a very juſt and true account of the various ingredients which compoſe Incivility. As to Civility, if I am not miſtaken, it is an univerſal duty; all mankind have a natural claim to it from one another, and without it there can be no intercourſe in ſociety, but what is diſagreeable, ſhocking, brutiſh, and dangerous. Every good-natured, generous-ſpirited perſon, will practiſe it for pleaſure; every ſenſible man, whether good natured or not, for his own convenience and quiet.

SKETCH XLV.

SENTENCES, MAXIMS, AMD REVERIES.

THERE are many degrees of madneſs on this ſide of Bedlam. Thoſe too that ſtop ſhort of it, are by far the moſt dangerous kinds of inſanity; and it would be much happier for the public, as well as for many individuals, if ſome people were a little madder than they appear to be.

Moſt oddities, I apprehend, have a twang of madneſs in them; though they are often the exceſs of ſome good quality.

In education, it is perhaps proper and neceſſary for young people to be puſhed on to many hard and diſagreeable things; eſpecially as they are ſo often unavoidable in life. Had it depended upon one's own choice, who would have dared to have been born? Good God! to be received into the world by a frightful old woman of either ſex! — Hercules himſelf would have avoided it if he could.

What does a conſcience void of all *great offences* ſignify to one who torments himſelf for every little miſbehaviour, every inattention, of which abſence, hurry, or a hypochondraical fit of diffidence, may have made him guilty? For one trifling neglect in point of

of good manners, may give more pain of mind to a man of much ſenſibility, than all the horrible crimes of a moſt flagitious life ever gave to ſuch a profligate wretch as Cæſar Borgia; whom I take to be the greateſt of all modern villains. For the preſent are ſtill out of the queſtion.

Catiline was but half a villain—He ſtrikes you only with horror. The compleat villain affects you at the ſame time with horror and contempt.

I forget whether it is a reflection of Machiavel's or ſome other political writer, that the ſtate or empire muſt go to ruin in a great hurry, whoſe affairs are conducted by ſuch people as in low life muſt have belonged to a gang of thieves, or made perhaps ſome figure amongſt the banditti.

The characters that hiſtorians give of ſome eminent perſons are not always quite juſt. Caligula, for inſtance, has been repreſented by moſt of them as a monſter of cruelty. For my part, I cannot help conſidering him as *the beſt of emperors*; and have always admired the humanity of his wiſh, that the mob of Rome had but one neck, and himſelf a good ſharp ax to let drop upon it. A tyrant, whoſe taſte in the *virtû* led him to bloody exerciſes, would naturally have wiſhed that every Roman had at leaſt three heads, that he might never be diſtreſſed for want of *game*. Yet, after all, I'm afraid that this good-natured ſentiment of Caligula might, by ſome ſevere moraliſt, be imputed rather to indolence than to real humanity: for ſometimes, to be ſure, *Decipimur ſpecie recti—We are impoſed upon by falſe appearances of virtue.*

'How!—Caliban turned critic!'—'Which Caliban? for they're a numerous family, bleſs their ſweet bodies! and ſeveral of them critics.'—'Lord! I mean the great lubberly ſea-calf that was found ſnoring with open mouth upon the beach after the laſt ſpring-tide.'—'O he!'—'Yes, a critic to be ſure; and, ſtupid as you may think him, he may be of excellent uſe to a reader who has his cue: for he muſt be read backwards; as the very reverſe of his opinions will generally, I don't ſay always, be juſt and true.' Moſt of our preſent critics naturally enough put me in mind of an arch thing that a certain witty gentleman ſaid upon a ſimilar occaſion: *Optat Ephippia bos piger—The heavy ox would gladly be as fine as a horſe.* Juſt as if an awkward, clumſey, dancing bear, ſhould be ſmit with the ambition of ſhining at the Ridotto.

As there are not perhaps, even in this ſenſible age, above three or four infallible men in all England; and one of them is ſometimes inacceſſible from cruel fits of the aſthma, and ſome naſty ſcorbutick complaints: I ſhould think it beſt, in all doubtful critical deciſive ſituations, to conſult the greateſt fool of your acquaintance. And if he adviſes a voyage to the Eaſt Indies, be ſure to throw yourſelf into the firſt ſhip that is to ſail to Jamaica. I am told that ſome of the antients uſed to pay a religious veneration to a certain kind of people; and they muſt have had ſome reaſon for it.

It would be a capital joke to obſerve how clever and ſenſible a fool thinks himſelf; if it was not ſo very common a ſight as it happens to be.

When there is the leaſt time for deliberation, one ſhould never do any thing in a hurry. A friend of mine, who does not want for a reaſonable ſhare of pride, told me ſome days ago, that he ſhould never forgive himſelf for having once, in a fit of abſence and fluttering ſpirits, too readily executed what was propoſed, by a very impertinent meſſage which came to him from a pair of people, whom he hardly knew further than by name. Though at the ſame time it happened to be the very thing he had intended to do; for the ſake of avoiding ſuch unreaſonable and illiberal reflections as in ſome ſituations are naturally to be apprehended from malice or ignorance.

'What d'ye mean by ſaying always '*ſame day, ſaid day?* Can't you ſay *the* '*ſame day*, you barbarian? I have 'often heard you ſay *lay*, where you 'ought to ſay *lye*. Bleſs your body! 'Why do you *put always*, inſtead of '*always put*, the adverb after the verb? 'It has a vile effect: but you may 'ſufficiently flatten your language with-'out it; for it is languid and drawling 'enough at the beſt. You have got a 'deſpicable habit, too, of ſaying *neither* 'this *or* that. If you underſtood even 'the mechanical rules of grammar, you 'would ſay *neither* this, *nor* that, *nor* 'any thing. I ſuppoſe you'll ſet about 'coining new words by and by. But 'depend upon it you'll never make one

'that will find itself *admissible* to the 'English language. It will *respue* every 'word that is issued from your mint.— 'For my part, as it seems hitherto un- 'determined whether one should say '*never* or *ever*, as in the following in- 'stance—*If a patriot was ever so active 'in attempting the ruin of his country*— 'till this subtle point is decided, I shall 'sometimes say *ever*, sometimes *never*, 'just as it happens to suit my ear.'

'Pray, why don't you roll about in 'your carriage again, as you did when 'you were many years younger, and 'could not so easily afford it as now?' —'Why, Sir, I am, thank Heaven, 'very able to walk: and without a great 'deal of exercise, I can neither eat nor 'sleep. Besides, Sir, I always hated 'that jolting over the stones; and every 'good day, when I envied all foot pas- 'sengers, I used to grudge myself the 'expence that either my own or other 'peoples vanity cost me in that article. 'Now, whenever it rains, or the streets 'are dirty, I can command a coach or 'a chair for a mere trifle.'—'But at this 'rate who will employ you?'—'None 'I hope but a few friends, to whom I 'most devoutly wish perpetual health; 'and as soon as this life is grown in- 'sipid to them, an easy and quick pas- 'sage to a better; that my tranquillity 'may never be interrupted by their dis- 'tress. Nay, you are welcome to laugh 'at me as long as you please; but my 'present scheme is to pass the time as 'agreeably as I can, and to have no 'more to do with business than is con- 'sistent with that scheme.'—'Well, 'thou'rt a strange fellow; a most un- 'happy mixture of ambition, indolence, 'love of pleasure, and a kind of deli- 'cacy very ill calculated to succeed in 'the scramble of life.—'No, I beg 'your pardon, I am pretty well cured 'of my ambition. For when I see what 'sort of geniuses very commonly make 'no small noise and bustle—But I would 'not be thought to envy where I have 'always despised—*Non equidem invi- 'deo, miror magis.* Though, after all, 'there is but little room here for won- 'der, considering what kind of people 'constitute the great majority of all 'ranks in a certain overgrown town: 'and how even many of them, that in 'other common affairs are not fools, to 'avoid the trouble of judging for them- 'selves, often follow the rest in mat- 'ters of the utmost consequence to their 'own precious lives.'

Impudence, the thriving son of Stu- pidity, will make very small talents do great things.

That glaring dim-eyed pug is in such vogue, that though I know him to be, in point of understanding, amongst the most vulgar of the human race; I am almost tempted to impose so strangely upon my own judgment, as to imagine there is something in him.

'Pray, who is that facetious gentle- 'man? He can't so much as ask how 'you do without laughing. He must 'lead a merry life. D'ye know him?'— 'Upon my word, not I. But I have 'observed that the dullest people gene- 'rally laugh the most: from a consci- 'ousness, perhaps, of their own insipi- 'dity, which they endeavour to disguise 'by the exercise of laughing.'

'For Heaven's sake, my dear friend, 'don't make a trade of laughing. If 'your aim is to be witty every hour of 'the day, you'll turn out a teazing, dis- 'agreeable companion. When the wea- 'ther or the company is against you, 'keep yourself quiet; and never be 'ashamed to be dull amongst block- 'heads, let them be never so noisy. In 'conversation, wit should be accidental; 'otherwise you must otherwise despise 'it's vanity and affectation. Meantime, 'after mangling a joke that has thrown 'ten or a dozen sensible people into a 'hearty fit of laughing, don't be so 'cruel as to doubt whether it really was 'a joke or not; and to conclude, be- 'cause you cannot recollect all the cir- 'cumstances, that the mirth it produced 'must have been owing to the manner 'of saying it. Besides, that sometimes 'a very good joke can hardly be re- 'peated without losing it's spirit; the 'best jokes, though they are felt imme- 'diately by people of proper sensations, 'are not always easily explained as to 'the *mode of titillation*, with which they 'affect the *risible faculty*; except perhaps 'by some phlegmatic metaphysical con- 'noisseur in wit, who never once felt a 'good joke in his life.—Pray, what is 'it that pleases you in the smell of a 'jonquil, a rose, or gilly-flower? If 'you're resolved not to enjoy their fra- 'grance till that is explained, you may 'as well shut up your nose for ever.'

I have seen a most unnatural extra- vagant piece of absurdity received with great

great applauſe; while flaſhes of true wit have paſſed without the leaſt notice.

It is ſo eaſy to tickle fools with blaſphemy, petulance, and any kind of indecent ribaldry, that theſe are the common reſources of every crazy impudent fellow who would paſs for a wit.

You never meet with any impertinence in the company of well-bred people—while you are decent and inoffenſive yourſelf, you have no diſagreeable behaviour in any ſhape to apprehend from them. And the more wit any man has, you will, almoſt without exception, find him the leſs apt to be petulant.

There is nothing ſo provoking as the impertinent compliments of a fool who wiſhes you well; who ſhocks you while he thinks he is doing you a pleaſure.

It happened, as I have been informed, that ſeveral years ago a gentleman, whoſe name I cannot at preſent recollect, obſerved to Mr. T. that Mr. B. though he paſſed for a man of genius, was rather a hum-drum companion, and ſeldom ſaid any thing very remarkable. To which Mr. M. told me that Mr. T. replied—'Aye, but 'he never fails to improve what *you* 'ſay.' This ſeemed to be performing the part of rather a cold back friend. For I have known Mr. T. ſhine whole evenings together upon hints, in a manner whiſpered to him by the foreſaid Mr. B—; while he happened to be either too modeſt or too indolent to purſue them himſelf. But a man of tickliſh ſenſations may find it impoſſible to be happy and in good humour in the company of certain particular people, whom at the ſame time he may perhaps regard for ſome good qualities.

I forgot who told me that Mr. T. ſhould once upon a time have aſked how a certain gentleman, whoſe name has ſlipt through my memory, could poſſibly be a poet, as he had never once ſeen a hill. Now I apprehend that Mr. T. muſt have been miſinformed here; for I remember to have met the very gentleman in queſtion one Sunday evening, I think it might have been towards June or July, upon the utmoſt ſummit of *Conſtitution Hill*.

One evening, after the reſt of the company were gone, that moſt delightful companion Mr. Q. who *ſhould have died hereafter*, told an acquaintance of mine, that in caſe he outlived him, he would do a friendly office to his memory; and aſked him where he would chuſe to have his buſt ſet up. 'Any where,' replied the other, after thanking Mr. Q. for the great honour he intended him, 'but in Weſtminſter Abbey.'

To come to an end with anecdotes of this kind. One who had publiſhed ſome things with tolerable ſucceſs, told me, that his having paſſed for a poet, had done him more miſchief than any ſenſible perſon could eaſily conceive; but at the ſame time he could not help owning, that it had oftener than once procured him the honour of a bow, in paſſing along the Strand or Fleet Street, from a gentleman with whom he never had any further acquaintance. I have, oftener than once heard the ſame perſon mention one circumſtance with particular regret; that he had never been able to diſcover or gueſs amongſt all his acquaintances, to whom he was obliged for an elegant preſent, left at his lodgings ſome years ago by a gentleman who did not leave his name; and to whom, of courſe, he could not expreſs his due acknowledgments for a favour which he highly values.

'Sir,' ſays one, 'this piece, even 'if all the parts could be well perform-'ed, would hardly ſucceed here. It 'might, perhaps, at Paris; where every 'one that goes to the play, is as ſeri-'ouſly attentive as the moſt devout 'people here are to a ſermon. But in 'ſome places natural and unexagge-'rated repreſentations of life are not 'felt; the audience muſt be kept awake 'with ſhew, noiſe, and buſtle. Here 'the genteeler part of the company are 'indeed merely *ſpectators*; they go to 'ſee, and diſplay themſelves to one an-'other. And what other reaſonable 'motive can they have—conſidering 'what kind of entertainment the ſtage 'for the moſt part exhibits at preſent?'

'I tell you, Sir,' ſays another upon a different occaſion, 'this is ſtupid, 'indecent, villainous traſh.'—'But 'have you read it?'—'Yes, above a 'dozen lines.'—'That's hardly 'enough; read the whole, and then 'judge.'—'God forbid!—muſt I eat

'whole

'a whole ſaddle of mutton before I have 'a right to ſay it is vile rotten ſtuff?'

That a writer with very middling and even contemptible parts, may do a great deal more miſchief than thoſe of the firſt abilities can do good, is too evident. How much more ſucceſsful have a parcel of indecent, profligate, lying, inflammatory ſcribblers, been of late years, in ſtupifying, and brutalizing a whole nation; than thoſe elegant, genteel moral writers, who ſhone about the beginning of this century, were in refining and poliſhing it!—But it is much eaſier to ſet fire to a palace or a temple, than to white-waſh a cottage.

Some of thoſe black-guard geniuſes are Poets too, God wot!—With crazy, ſtupid heads, and bad hearts; without one ſpark of imagination; without either ſenſe, verſification, or language, they are Poets; and the fitteſt indeed to gain the applauſe of the vulgar, *great and ſmall, high and low*. For they ſcribble juſt ſuch traſh as any of the rabble would that could ſcribble at all. Their works are truly *adapted to the meaneſt capacities*. Their poetry is the dulleſt proſe ſpurred up into an aukward, hobbling aſs-trot. Quite oppoſite to Orpheus, and thoſe *real* poets, whoſe moral harmony firſt humanized the woodland ſavages, and tamed them into ſocial life; theſe nightingales of Newgate, theſe black ſwans of Fleet Ditch, theſe infernal ſcreech owls, ſing nothing but ſongs of diſcord, and ſedition, and treaſon. But not all the rage and fury of the moſt rancorous hearts can rouſe the poetical impotence of thoſe bards to any thing above the inſipidity of flat unmannerly abuſe, which they and their admirers call ſatire. However, they cannot laſt long. One may venture to propheſy a ſhort life, and an infamous memory, to the ſtupid ditties of all ſuch Poets; and it is an indiſputable truth that no Muſe ever yet dwelt in the breaſt of a ſcoundrel.

Several of theſe detached Sentences and Reveries were ſet down as materials for a poetical ſatire; but as the general run of readers here do not underſtand verſe, except it is ſo ſtupid as none but a muſe-bit blockhead can poſſibly write, it is ſaving ſome needleſs pains to ſend them out in their preſent ſhape. So let them go: and if our noble maſters the Mobility do not reliſh them, ſo much the better. They are the more likely to procure the approbation of thoſe few judges to whoſe praiſe alone one would chuſe to aſpire.

SKETCH XLVI.

A PLAN OF A DEDICATION.

THE late Mr. Cibber addreſſed the Apology for his Life *To a certain Gentleman*; whereas I LAUNCELOT TEMPLE preſume to addreſs my SKETCHES

TO AN UNCERTAIN GENTLEMAN.

SIR,

I Humbly beg leave to lay the following ſheets at your noble and magnificent feet. In an age where ſcarce any thing but falſe genius, and the moſt impudent quackery in every ſhape, meets with encouragement, I appeal to *you*, whom I have always deemed * *the conſummate judge of literary merit:* and I fly in a fluttering hurry to your *protection*. It would offend your modeſty, Sir, ſhould I give way to the enthuſiaſm with which I have conſtantly admired your amiable behaviour in private life; in the various characters of ſon, father, brother, huſband, uncle, couſin, lover, friend, debtor, creditor, maſter, &c. &c. together with your † *ſuperlative powers of*

* This compliment was made, ſeveral years ago, by a writer of uncommon genius and abilities, in a Dedication to a certain diſtinguiſhed perſonage; though ſome ſay it has never yet appeared upon what foundation.

† This is one of many news-paper compliments which I am *credibly informed* ſome *Patriots* from day to day have ſilly made to themſelves, with great ſucceſs, amongſt a parcel of blind, ignorant, credulous people, who never will learn to ſmell a rat, but where there is none.

of charming in converſation. But, good God! with what ſuperior *brilliancy* you ſhine the * *Cynoſure* of State, to guide it's weather-beaten hulk to the port of ſafety and tranquillity! To your wiſe, able, frugal, and moſt ſtrictly œconomical conduct, throughout the operations of a needleſs and pernicious war, which to be ſure you found unavoidable, it is chiefly owing that your country makes at preſent ſuch a figure as aſtoniſhes all it's neighbours. The raging flames of Veſuvius are a paltry, blackguard, patriotic illumination, compared to it's luſtre. You ſhine, Sir, equally in peace. To your noble perſeverance and obſtinacy in the cauſe of liberty and religion, this iſland owes the firm, ſteady, manly, adminiſtration of it's government, not leſs wiſe than virtuous; and the capital of your country ought particularly to thank you for the preſent ſtate of it's incomparable police. The nice diſcernment too, and the diſtinguiſhing taſte you have ſhewn in patronizing Genius in all it's variety of ſhapes, is none of your ſmalleſt excellencies.—But I beg pardon, Sir; for I am ſure you would never forgive me if I ſhould attempt to violate your delicacy with any thing ſo fulſome as bare-faced praiſe. Your virtues, Sir, and your fine qualities, are innumerable, and beyond all expreſſion. I could go further; but it would be invidious to ſay, that in an age moſt contemptibly weak, and moſt ſhockingly wicked, you ſtand almoſt alone to ſupport the dignity of human nature.

But as I know, Sir, you deſpiſe every thing that looks like flattery; and are too delicate to bear even the juſteſt praiſe with any degree of patience: to convince you, Sir, that, after all this appearance of compliment, I am no flatterer; and to ſhew you the ſincerity of my friendſhip—(begging pardon, my moſt noble and ſublime Patron, for the familiarity of the word)—as a ſudden ſquall of praiſe may eaſily overſet a veſſel that perhaps carries more ſail than ballaſt; and, to ſhift from one metaphor to another, as I ſhould be ſorry to give you ſuch an over-doſe of a ſweet poiſon as might drive you out of your ſenſes, and make you expoſe yourſelf ſtark naked through the whole town, as mad as any king who holds his reſidence at either of the palaces in Moorfields; I muſt be ſo plain as to tell you, Sir, that I do *not* as an author ſolicit your *protection*—Bleſs your dear ſweet *protection!*—If you have any ſecret to protect ſtupid writing from the contempt of good judges, keep up your *protection* for ſome other occaſion. It is not impoſſible that you may, one time or another, be ſmit with the vanity of turning author yourſelf. It might happen next moon, if it was not for *Arthur's* or *New-market.*

But ſhall I at laſt fairly and honeſtly preſent you with a peep of the cloven foot from under the long black gown of diſſimulation and hypocriſy!—You ſhall have it at once, without the leaſt ceremony.—Bleſs me! did you think me in earneſt all this time!—Are you ſo ſlow of apprehenſion, my noble Patron, as not to perceive that the high praiſes, with which I have at laſt in a whimſical fit taken it into my head to tickle your ear, are nothing but mere raſcally compliments, without the leaſt particle of ſincerity?—Is your vanity ſo irrecoverably blind, as to make it neceſſary to tell you, that all this is nothing but an exerciſe in the thriving art of adulation; very fairly practiſed upon one who has ſo long fed *me* with the delicious repaſt of flattery—for which I have been near the eighth part of a century over head and ears in your debt; and now endeavour to pay you my arrears at once in your own counters.—Mean time, I have the *honour* to be, with the moſt profound reſpect and eſteem, and the moſt inviolable attachment, Sir, your moſt faithful and *ſuperlatively* devoted humble ſervant,

LAUNCELOT TEMPLE.

* The ſtar called the Dog's Tail.

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